The basic unit of the Chinese language is the zi (字), i.e., a Chinese word. Each zi has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string zi together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

This week: Words about travelling

車 意味： 拼音： che (Putonghua, 1st tone), che (Cantonese 1st tone) 基本意义： cart, car, machine

車 means wheeled vehicles/machines: 人力車 (ren li che = human-strength-cart = rickshaw), 馬車 (ma che = horse-vehicle), 風車 (feng che = wind-machine = windmill), 坦克車 (tan ke che = tank-(transliterated)-car = tank), 十字車 (shi zi che = cross-shaped-word-car = ambulance).

坐車 (zuo che = sit-car) means travel by train/car. 火車 (huo che = fire-car) means train. 汽車 (qi che = steam-car) means automobile. 地車 (di che = land-car) means underground/metro. Taxi is 計程車 (ji cheng che = calculate-journey-car). Bus/train terminal/stop is 車站 (che zhan = car-stand).

車去醫院 (che qu yi yuan = car-transport-to-doctor-institute) = drive (someone) to hospital. 車衣 (che yi = machine-clothes) means using sewing machine to make garments.

by Diana Yue